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SOURCE Periodical and newspaper as indicated.

EXCESSIVE SHIP LAYOVER IN SOVIET MERCHANT FLEET

[This report consists of a compilation of articles from the periodical Morskoy Flot and the newspaper Morskoy Flot on 1951 plan fulfillment by the Soviet merchant fleet, planned increases in 1952, and the causes for the excessive ship layover in 1951 and the first half of 1952.

Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.]

The Ministry of Merchant Fleet completed its 1951 hauling plan 102.3 percent in tons, which was an increase of 8 percent over 1950, and of 78 percent over 1946. Maritime ports completed their 1951 year plan 108 percent, and the level of mechanization in freight handling reached 90 percent.

However, the 1951 plan for freight turnover (in ton-miles) was not completed and unproductive layover of ships at ports and roadsteads continued to be excessive. Ship-repair work and new construction lagged and accidents were numerous. (1)

The 1952 plan calls for an increase in freight hauling of 20 percent in tons, and 12 percent in ton-miles over 1950 (2), or an increase of 9 percent in tons and 9 percent in ton-miles over 1951. (3) However, in the second quarter 1952, the hauling plan of the ministry was completed only 94.5 percent in tons, and 96.1 percent in ton-miles. Glavyuzhflot (Main Administration of Southern Merchant Fleet), Glavdal'flot (Main Administration of Far Eastern Merchant Fleet), and Glavnefteflot (Main Administration of Petroleum-Carrying Fleet) are especially lagging behind plan. The following nine ship lines are failing to complete their plans for both volume and ton-mileage hauled: Black Sea, Caspian Dry-Cargo, Far East, Sakhalin, Kamchatsko-Chukotsk, Kasptanker (Caspian Dry-Cargo), Reydtanker (Astrakhan Roadstead), Estonian, and Latvian. The main reasons for the lag in plan fulfillment were the excessive ship layover in ports, especially in the Far East, tardy repair of ships, poor dispatching, and poor work organization in ports. (4)

- 1 -

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To improve indexes of maritime freight hauling, ship turnaround must be accelerated and unproductive ship layover eliminated. In 1951, unproductive ship layover for the entire navigation season amounted to 13.7 percent of the total operating time of the dry-cargo fleet, and 9 percent of that of the petroleum-carriers. Altogether, the dry-cargo fleet spent 3,519 ship-days in unproductive layover in 1951 while awaiting dock space. This represents a loss of nearly 650,000 tons of the fleet's carrying capacity and does not include layover for other purposes.(2)

Ship layover in the merchant fleet has actually increased during 1952. During the second quarter, 13,900 ship-hours were lost, which is a 29.3-percent (23.5 percent per 1,000 tons of processed freight) increase over the same period in 1951.(4) In January and February 1952 alone, ships of Glavsevzapflot (Main Administration of Northwestern Fleet) spent 8,590 hours in unproductive layover, Glavdal'flot more than 30,380 hours, Glavnefteflot 5,430 hours, and Glavyuzhflot more than 5,030 hours.(1)

One of the main reasons for the lag in petroleum hauling on the Caspian Sea is the lack of coordination between the Reydtanker and Kasptanker ship lines and the indifference shown by these ship lines to excessive ship layover at the transshipping points. Thousands of hours are lost because ships arrive at the transshipping points off schedule. The Reydtanker Ship Line's shortage of tugs and delays in ship-repair work contribute to this situation.(5)

Poor work organization and machinery shortages in ports are also responsible for ship layover. Krasnovodsk, one of the largest ports on the Caspian Sea, continually fails to complete its assigned tasks in freight handling.(6) Although the port is 95.7 percent mechanized (7), it completed only 89 percent of its plan for freight handling in the first 7 months of 1952. In this period, only 44.7 percent of the ships were processed on time or ahead of schedule, while the remaining 55.3 percent were processed behind schedule. Over 5,133 hours were lost in ship processing and an additional 4,564 hours were lost while ships were awaiting loading and unloading operations at the piers. Even more time is lost while ships are at anchor waiting for berths.

Port machinery is not fully utilized, and not a single crane or bucket conveyor is working according to a time schedule. Port workers blame bad weather and machinery breakdowns for their failure to complete their schedules. Time lost because of these reasons is small in comparison to the time lost because of failure to plan or schedule machinery operation. During 7 months, port machinery was idle 90,000 hours. Of this time, only 1,274 hours were lost because of bad weather conditions and 510 hours because of machinery breakdowns.(6)

The lack of coordination between the Caspian Dry-Cargo Ship Line and the Krasnovodsk Division of the Ashkhabad Railroad System has also hindered port operations. Loaded ships arriving at the port find no available empty railroad cars, while at other times empty cars lie idle while awaiting freight. Also, the ports switching locomotives are in bad repair and switching operations are carried out very inefficiently.(7)

The Krasnovodsk port fleet is also operating unsatisfactorily; its 6-month plan was completed only 40 percent. As in other ports, the fleet receives its month plan from Glavyuzhflot very late and sometimes not at all, making operations very difficult.(6)

The lack of large cranes for loading and unloading ore and coal is slowing down operations at the port of Poti.(8) Freight turnover there is on the increase, but since mechanization has not increased, much manual labor has to be employed. Portal cranes are needed at Poti to unload ships with many hatches because ship cranes are not adequate for this task. However, two cranes recently

- 2 -

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50X1-HUM

sent to Poti by Glavyuzhflot to mechanize the ore and coal piers were poorly re-built cranes formerly used at Odessa and were not satisfactory. At the same time, new equipment (portal cranes) is sent by Glavyuzhflot to the port of Zhdanov, which is less in need of port equipment than Poti. Portal cranes at Poti work without interruption throughout the year and are much in need of repair. One crane has worked 19 years without capital repairs.

Poti lags behind both Zhdanov and Odessa in modernizing its loading and unloading operations. (9)

SOURCES

1. Moscow, Morskoy Flot, No 4, Apr 52
2. Ibid., No 7, Jul 52
3. Ibid., No 5, May 52
4. Ibid., No 8, Aug 52
5. Moscow, Morskoy Flot, 19 Jul 52
6. Ibid., 24 Sep 52
7. Ibid., 13 Sep 52
8. Ibid., 23 Aug 52
9. Ibid., 6 Aug 52

- E N D -

- 3 -

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